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Redevelopment Board Minutes 01/24/2011

Minutes of Monday, January 24, 2011
Arlington Redevelopment Board
Selectmen's Hearing Room, Town Hall
Approved 2/7/11

Members Present:
Michael Cayer
Ted Fields
Bruce Fitzsimmons
Chris Loret, Chairman
Andrew West

Mr. Loret called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Mr. Loret asked new Board members Ted Fields and Mike Cayer to introduce themselves. The Board welcomed the new members.

The Board then discussed the news from Ms. Kowalski that Beacon Communities had withdrawn its offer to pursue development of the Symmes project. The Board wished to understand the process the bank would pursue for attracting a new developer. Mr. Loret asked Ms. Kowalski to speak with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development regarding the timing of an appraisal on the Medical Office Building site.

The Chairman then recognized Beth Ann Friedman and Janice Brodman of the Symmes Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Ms. Friedman said she understood the JPI was looking for developers who could build as permitted. The Board asked Ms. Kowalski to contact Ms. Paulsen at PNC Bank to learn the intended role for JPI in seeking a new developer.

The Board then discussed the leases and management of the Central School building. Mr. Loret posed the question of whether the Board could consider having the Redevelopment Board hire someone to manage the building with the proceeds from the rent. Ms. Kowalski reminded the Board that two salaries were offset with Central School lease revenue. The Board asked the process by which these two salaries were funded through revenue from the buildings. Ms. Kowalski did not know the history of this budget decision.

The Board asked Ms. Kowalski to provide a copy of any written agreement with Mystic River Watershed Association on their use of the building, and to update the square footage information on the Housing Corporation of Arlington on a spreadsheet provided to the Board, and to explain a discrepancy in leased space and available space at 23 Maple Street. The Board asked for floor plans of the Central School.

Ms. Kowalski then informed the Board of the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen's interest in possibly selling certain Town-owned lease buildings, including 23 Maple Street. Mr. West cited the Parmenter Crosby study as a good format for a similar method and analysis of 23 Maple Street. Mr. Cayer suggested asking a realtor for an opinion of value of 23 Maple Street. Ms. Kowalski would pursue this. Ms. Kowalski said she would talk with the current tenants regarding their interest in renewing for a short term lease.

The Board then turned to the draft language for votes on the zoning bylaw amendments. For the article to amend section 6.06, the Board asked the Department to research the setbacks in existence in August 1975. The Board asked whether the municipality's bylaw may be stricter than Massachusetts General Law with respect to "grandfathering".

The Board then discussed agenda items for its planning and zoning workshop, and asked that the Great Meadow, Alewife Brook, overlay districts, and the ARB's role in planning initiatives in Arlington and outside of Arlington all be added to the list of items for future ARB planning workshops.

Turning to the January 10, 2011 minutes, Mr. West then moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Fitzsimmons seconded and Mr. West, Mr. Loret, and Mr. Fitzsimmons voted in favor, and Mr. Cayer and Mr. Fields abstained since they were not yet members at the January 10 meeting.

Mr. Fields then moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded, approved by all, and the meeting adjourned at 10:00pm

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kowalski
Secretary ex Officio